DC COMICS™

ZERO YEAR
FINALE

BATMAN™

33

SNYDER
CAPULLO
MIKI
PLASCENCIA

THE NEW 52!

RATED T TEEN

SEP 2014

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75 YEARS OF BATMAN

ZERO YEAR

SAVAGE CITY

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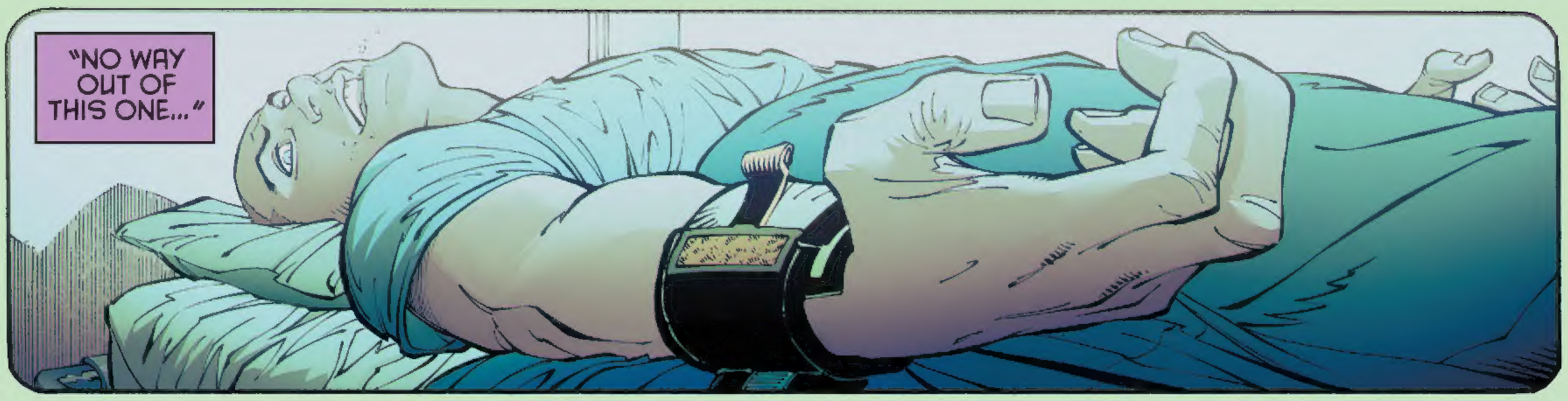

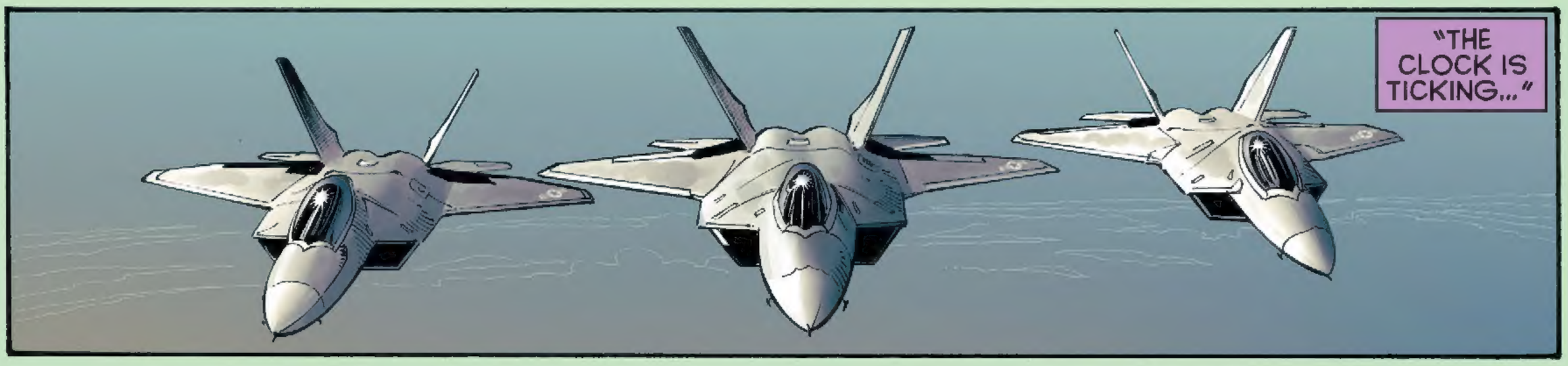

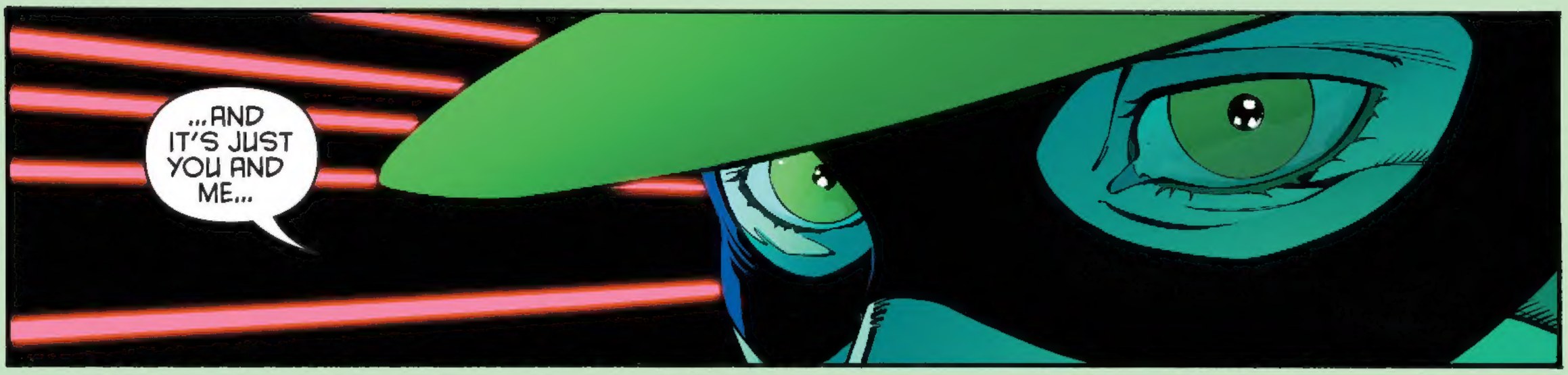

...SO LET'S START THE FINAL GAME, SHALL WE?!

STOP THIS, NYGMA! YOU'VE PROVEN YOUR POINT TO THE CITY! YOU HAVE A CHANCE RIGHT NOW, ***ONE*** CHANCE, TO SAVE GOTHAM. THE JETS SET OFF THOSE ***BOMBS***, AND--

HA! ONE CHANCE, EH? I'LL DO YOU ONE BETTER, BATMAN. I'LL GIVE YOU ***TWELVE*** CHANCES. TWELVE STEPS. TWELVE MONTHS IN THE YEAR.

TWELVE ***RIDDLES*** TO SAVE THE CITY. GO FAST THOUGH, BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, AS WE SPEAK, I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE JETS ROARING TOWARDS OUR FAIR HOME!

SEE, THE RULES ARE SIMPLE. I ASK YOU A RIDDLE...

...IF YOU GET IT RIGHT, THE *LASERS* BARRING YOUR PATH BECOME INACTIVE, AND YOU *ADVANCE* ONE SQUARE.

YOU GET IT *WRONG*, AND, WELL...

...EVERY ONE OF THESE BEAMS IS RIGGED TO TRIGGER A WEATHER BALLOON SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY.

AND THOSE BALLOONS, AS YOU KNOW, ARE FILLED WITH *STUFF* THAT, WELL, LET'S JUST SAY YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO PUT IT ON YOUR SANDWICH, AM I RIGHT? LIKE TERRIBLE THOUGHT BALLOONS ABOVE THE CITY! IDEAS WAITING TO BE MADE MATERIAL.

...SO SHALL WE?

YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THE GAME IS *RIGGED!*

THERE ARE TOO MANY STEPS, TOO MANY RIDDLES TO MAKE IT TO YOU BEFORE THOSE PLANES GET HERE! BUT IF YOU'LL JUST--

MAYBE SO.

REALLY, IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW *SMART* YOU ARE. SO... I GUESS ALL THAT'S LEFT TO SAY IS...

"RRRRIDDLE ME THIS, BATMAN..."

LUCIUS! ARE YOU GETTING ANYTHING? ANY COMMUNICATION CHANNELS?

NO. *RIDDLER* HAS THE WHOLE CITY UNDER A NET. THERE'S NO WAY TO CONTACT THE MAINLAND AND CALL OFF THE JETS...→*koff*← UNLESS BATMAN TAKES HIM →*koff*← DOWN.

HE FOUND NYGMA?

I DON'T KNOW. HE... TOOK A GUESS.

THEN THERE'S A *CHANCE*. WE JUST HAVE TO DELAY THOSE JETS, CAPTAIN. THE LAST COMMUNICATION YOU HAD WITH THEM WAS THAT BATMAN WAS GOING TO CHALLENGE THE RIDDLER.

GIVE ME A *FLARE* GUN. I'LL GET UP THERE AND TRY TO *ALERT* THEM TO THE FACT THAT BATMAN HAS HIM--

DOES HE, THOUGH?

HE DAMN WELL BETTER.

LUCIUS, WITH THE COIL DESTROYED, IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN FIND ANOTHER *CONDUCTOR* SO THE BLOCKER--

→*SSS*←

YOU'RE HURT.

I'M FINE. I'LL →*UNH*← WORK ON THE BLOCKER. YOU GET UP THERE AND CONTROL SOME AIR TRAFFIC.

CAPTAIN, YOU TAKE THE COM EQUIPMENT AND KEEP TRYING TO RADIO FORT ROBBINS IN CASE BATMAN BREAKS THROUGH THE COMMUNICATION NET. FIRST, THOUGH...

...I NEED YOUR HELP SOLVING ONE *OTHER* PROBLEM.

"...AREN'T THE LIGHTS ENTRANCING, BATMAN?"

ALMOST *TROPICAL*... THEY MAKE ME WANT TO DANCE. CALYPSO, MAYBE?

SHUT UP AND ASK YOUR RIDDLE, NYGMA!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. NO NEED TO YELL! JUST HAVING A LITTLE FUN!

SO, RIDDLE ONE: I AM... "A HOUSE WITHOUT THE HEAD OF HEAD...

"KNITTED DEEP WITHIN THE TREES.

"A HEAD THAT LIES WITHOUT ITS EYES...

"... STITCHED SILENTLY TO TEASE."

WELL, BATMAN. WHAT AM I?

...

WHIRRR

HA, HAAA! COME ON, BATMAN... NO CHEATING.

NO FEATS OF PHYSICAL FEROCITY, NO GIZMOS OR *GADGETS*, JUST A WAR OF THE MIND. WHAT IS WAR, IF NOT A BATTLE BETWEEN TWO STRATEGIES? TWO MINDS IN THE SKY ABOVE THE BATTLEFIELD? AND THIS, THE PUREST FORM.

COME ON, BATMAN, THE CLOCK IS TICKING. YOU ONLY HAVE FIFTEEN--

GOTHAM CITY

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--MAKE THAT *FOURTEEN* MINUTES LEFT.

SO... "I AM...?"

...I AM...

"A LOUSE."

THE "HEAD OF HEAD," SUGGESTS THE FIRST LETTER OF THE WORD, MEANING: "H." AND "LIES WITHOUT ITS EYES..." LIES WITHOUT EYES LEAVES YOU WITH "L." "L" AND "OUSE" EQUAL "LOUSE." "KNITTED" IS A HOMONYM FOR "NITTED." "NITS" BEING LOUSE EGGS.

AND CALYPSO WAS A NYMPH. LICE EMERGE FROM EGGS AS NYMPHS, FULLY FORMED.

WELL THEN... YOU SOUND PRETTY SURE! LET'S PLUG IT IN AND SEE!

GO ON, BATMAN! TAKE THE LEAP!

...

THERE.

WELL DONE! BUT I HAVE TO WARN YOU...

"...THE REAL CONUNDRUMS ARE AHEAD!"

KRASH

COME ON...

SCREEEE

AAGH!

"DON'T STOP!"

NO MORE PAUSING. JUST ASK THE *NEXT* ONE.

GETTING TESTY, EH?

YOU WANT TO PLAY, FINE, LET'S PLAY. NOW ASK!

AS YOU WISH!

"I HAVE A SINGLE VOICE, A THOUSAND THROATS...

"I SELL MY TALE FOR PEANUTS, BUT THEN--"

I AM A *BEE.* BEES BUZZ WITH ONE VOICE, ONE MIND. A COMB IS MADE UP OF "CELLS," THE QUEEN'S IS SHAPED LIKE A PEANUT.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

ENTER IT.

YES, SIR.

NEXT RIDDLE.

"COME ON, JIM!"

SOMETHING TO *SIGNAL* THEM... SOMETHING TO--

WHHHOOOSHHH

NO. NOT YET...

"ALL RIGHT, THIS IS WHERE THINGS GET A LITTLE TRICKIER..."

...MORE... *EXACTING* AND--

SHUT UP AND ASK!

NOW BATMAN! I CAN'T SHUT UP *AND* ASK, UNLESS YOU MEAN--

ASK!

ALL RIGHT, THEN.

"MY GREATEST OF MY STRENGTHS...

"...IS THAT I KNOW MY WORTH. I HUG MYSELF SO TIGHTLY AT EVERY BIRTH."

WELL, BATMAN...

...WHAT-EVER COULD I BE?

...

"WHAT'S THE MATTER, BATMAN..."

ON FINAL APPROACH...

...CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?

HA! YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER, DO YOU?

I...

WHIRRRRRR-*

"UH-OH! NOT NOW! NOT WHEN THOSE JETS ARE ONLY SECONDS AWAY!"

"COME ON! YOU CAN DO IT! GIVE IT YOUR BEST--"

THE ANSWER IS...

"...A BLADE."

YOUR REASONING?

FORGET THE REASONING. PLUG IT IN.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE...

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH!

ARMING DOGS.

YOU GUESSED...

...WRONG!

IF ONLY YOU'D SEEN THE *THEME,* BATMAN! THE DESIGN!

THE ANSWERS TO THESE RIDDLES, EACH ONE WAS THE ANSWER TO A *FAMOUS* UNSOLVABLE RIDDLE FROM HISTORY.

"LICE" WAS THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE THAT KILLED HOMER. AND "BEES" WAS PART OF THE ANSWER TO SAMSON'S IMPOSSIBLE RIDDLE. THE ANSWER TO THIS ONE WAS "KNOT," AS IN THE GREAT *GORDIAN* KNOT.

A KNOT UNSOLVABLE TO *EVERYONE,* EVEN ALEXANDER THE GREAT. YOU GUESSED A BLADE AND YOU WERE WRONG, WRONG, WRONG!

WAS I, NOW?

...

WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

LIKE I SAID, THE ANSWER TO YOUR RIDDLE IS A *BLADE.*

BOTS! FIRE! I SAID *FIRE* ON HIM!

THEY WON'T LISTEN TO YOU, EDDIE. I KNEW IT WHEN THEY STOPPED TRACKING ME.

"YOU DESTROY THE CONDUCTOR TO OUR BLOCKER. THANKFULLY, WE FOUND ANOTHER LYING AROUND.

"YOUR SIGNAL IS BLOCKED. YOU CONTROL NOTHING."

BUT ABOUT THAT *ANSWER.* YOU WERE RIGHT. ALEXANDER *COULDN'T* SOLVE THE RIDDLE OF THE GORDIAN KNOT.

SO WHAT DID HE DO?

"HE PULLED OUT HIS '*BLADE...*'

...AND HE CUT *THROUGH* THE THING!

UH... BASE, WE'RE BEING GIVEN SOME KIND OF... **SIGNAL** FROM A CITIZEN ON TOP OF THE TARGET. A **BAT.**

YES, THAT'S WHAT I SAID. A BAT-SIGNAL.

"ALL RIGHT, CIRCLING AND STANDING BY FOR ORDERS."

"HOW?!"

HOW DO WE TURN THE CITY *ON?!* YOUR SIGNAL IS *BLOCKED.* YOU CONTROL *NOTHING!* IT'S *OVER!*

TELL ME!

-koff- THAT IS THE CHALLENGE, ISN'T IT, BATMAN? THE BIG -koff- QUESTION MARK?

FUNNY THING, THE QUESTION MARK.

YOU KNOW, THEY SAY THE *FIRST* ONE, THE ORIGINAL SYMBOL, BACK IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY, IT WAS ACTUALLY SHAPED LIKE A LIGHTNING FLASH. LIKE A *SHOCK,* THE SPARK OF AN IDEA... PERHAPS SOMETHING LIKE...

...THIS.

WHAT THE HELL IS *THAT?*

HEH. IT'S THE FIRST AND LAST QUESTION, BATMAN. SEE, IT'S AN ***ELECTRODE.***

IT FEEDS MODULATED POWER TO ALL THE SERVERS IN THE OTHER ROOM. IT'S LIKE A BATTERY SET TO A HEARTBEAT...

...MY HEARTBEAT.

TAKE THE ELECTRODE OFF ME, AND, WELL, THE WHOLE ***SYSTEM*** DIES. EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE COMMUNICATION NET, OF COURSE. THE CITY GOES TRUE BLACK. AN EXQUISITE CORPSE AWAITING THE PYRE.

AS FOR STARTING IT BACK UP...WELL, IT'D NEED TO BE ENTIRELY ***REBOOTED.*** BORN AGAIN! THE CITY BONDED TO A NEW HEART! AND FOR THAT, WELL, IT'D NEED A CHARGE OF AT LEAST...I DON'T KNOW...

...A THOUSAND VOLTS? I MEAN, GO ON...GIVE IT A WHIRL. THERE HAS TO BE ***AT LEAST*** A ONE IN A THOUSAND CHANCE YOU'LL SURVIVE THE SHOCK AND SAVE THE DAY. *HEH.*

HA! YOU'RE CRAZY, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BUT THIS CITY, ALL OF IT, IT'S *MY* IDEA. MY DESIGN. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY WAYS I COULD HAVE CARRIED OUT THIS PLAN? HOW MANY VARIATIONS I--

DEFIBRILLATOR

ELECTROZAP

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS, BRUCE?

COPY. ORDERS TO RE-ENGAGE. FINAL PASS NOW.

DON'T DO IT...

ELECTROZAP

"YOU CAN STILL CALL THIS OFF."

NO.

200J

CURRENT

KENNEL OPEN. DOGS ARMED.

BITE DOWN.

PLEASE...

AWAITING LOCK.

HERE WE GO.

GET READY.

AND...

ZZZ

WORRRKKKK!

GOTHAM CITY

REBOOT...
REBOOT...
NO SIGNAL

...NO...

NO SIGNAL
NO SIGNAL

"NO."

"NO. WAIT!

"THIS ISN'T RIGHT!

"UNSTRAP ME!

"LET ME UP!

"LET ME UP!"

COME ON!

-GASP!-

WHAT THE...?

THE CITY... IT'S BACK ON!

YES, SIR. AWAITING ORDERS. AND RELIEVED.

"YOU DID IT..."

"...YOU BLOODY DID IT, SIR."

-koff- BUT...BUT HOW...

BECAUSE YOU'RE *BATMAN.* THAT'S HOW.

NO, *heh.* I KNOW *THAT.* BUT *YOU...* HOW DID YOU FIND ME...

I WAS ALREADY HERE. I SAW THE JETS CIRCLING THE TOWER AND ARRIVED JUST AS MR. FOX WAS LEAVING. I FOLLOWED HIM HERE.

YOU WERE HERE, IN THE CITY? BUT...

AS I TOLD YOU. I MIGHT NOT AGREE WITH YOU, EVER...

...BUT I'LL *ALWAYS* BE THERE TO PATCH YOU UP.

ONE MONTH LATER

"Nothingness.

"A void.

"No meaning or value.

"Just an end. A death. That's zero, isn't it?"

"IT WAS TO NYGMA. IT'S WHAT HE WANTED US TO BELIEVE ABOUT GOTHAM. THAT IT'S ENDING. THAT THESE ARE END-TIMES. BUT LOOK AT IT, THE CITY. IT ISN'T WHAT IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO, EVEN TEN YEARS AGO. NOT AT ALL.

"THAT'S THE WONDERFUL AND TERRIBLE THING ABOUT IT, ISN'T IT? IT'S ALWAYS CHANGING. GOTHAM AS WE KNOW IT, YOU AND I, IT EXISTS FOR A MOMENT IN TIME, ITS PEOPLE, ITS NEIGHBORHOODS, THE HOPES AND FEARS THAT POWER IT, AND THEN... POOF! IT'S GONE. AND A NEW CITY STANDS IN ITS PLACE.

"RIGHT NOW, THIS CITY, RUINED, BEAUTIFUL...IT'S OURS AND OURS ALONE. ITS FEARS--THEY'RE OURS, TOO. SUPERSTORMS. CATACLYSM. MADMEN WITH PRIVATE IDEOLOGIES WHO COME AT US WITH WEAPONS OF EVERY MAGNITUDE, OUT OF NOWHERE SOME MORNING. THESE ARE THE FEARS THAT HAUNT OUR CITY.

"BUT BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT WE WILL FACE THEM TOGETHER. BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, THIS IS OUR GOTHAM. NOT OUR FATHERS', AND NOT OUR SONS'. *OURS.* THIS GENERATION'S. AND OUR FEARS ARE GREAT, BUT SO ARE OUR HOPES. OUR AMBITIONS. OUR RESILIENCE. WE'RE FIGHTERS."

AND WE'RE A CITY STANDING AT ZERO. STANDING AT THE BEGINNING OF A CYCLE OF REBIRTH. IT'S OURS TO BUILD AND SHAPE AND TO BE SHAPED BY.

I'D LIKE WAYNE ENTERPRISES TO HELP LEAD THE WAY IN THAT RESHAPING.

AND I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER MAN TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN THAN MY GOOD FRIEND *LUCIUS FOX.*

MR. WAYNE...

...I JUST WANTED TO SAY THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION.

I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE, DID I? CAN'T REALLY SNUB THE NEW POLICE *COMMISSIONER.*

NOT WITH SO MANY OUTSTANDING PARKING TICKETS. MY CAR IS STILL OUT THERE DOUBLE-PARKED FROM A MONTH AGO. UNDERWATER, SURE, BUT STILL.

THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE LONG ARM, MR. WAYNE. BUT...

"...THIS STREET FAIR CERTAINLY SOFTENS ITS GRIP. IT'S A GOOD TIME DOWN THERE."

"WE ALL DESERVE ONE DAY OFF, I THINK, BEFORE ALL THE HARD WORK BEGINS AGAIN.

"CAN I ASK IF YOU'VE BEEN TO SEE HIM?"

BOUNCE

"I HAVE. IT WASN'T SAFE TO KEEP HIM AT BLACKGATE, SO THEY'RE ACTUALLY HOLDING HIM AT *ARKHAM.*"

"IT'S SAFE THERE?"

"THEY'RE NOT USED TO THE TASK, BUT THEY'RE WORKING ON IT. THE MONEY YOU GAVE CERTAINLY HELPS. HOPEFULLY KEEPING A CRIMINAL MADMAN THERE WILL BE A ONE-TIME THING. JUST UNTIL THE TRIAL, TOO."

"FEDERAL?"

"WE'LL SEE. THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM WANT HIM HERE, TO FACE THEM. THEY'RE TOUGH BASTARDS, GOTHAMITES. GO FIGURE."

GO FIGURE. WELL, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, COMMISSIONER.

MR. WAYNE, JUST ONE MORE THING...

I WENT OUTSIDE TO SMOKE AND FOUND MY CIGARETTES WERE GONE.

IT'S A BAD HABIT.

YES, IT IS...

BUT SEE, THEY WERE GONE BECAUSE MY *COAT* WAS GONE. WHEN I WENT TO THE COAT CHECK, THEY GAVE ME *THIS* ONE. IT'S THE EXACT SAME BRAND, SAME COAT, JUST...NEW.

MR. WAYNE. *BRUCE...* DID BATMAN MENTION...

I'M SORRY. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, COMMISSIONER.

ALL I CAN SAY IS, MAYBE IT WAS TIME FOR A NEW ONE.

SIR?

ALFRED. I IMAGINE YOU'RE DISAPPOINTED WE'RE NOT DOING BLACK TIE, BUT IT FELT--

OH, IT'S NICE TO HAVE A DAY AWAY FROM SUITS AND GLOVES, MASTER BRUCE...

... AND SPEAKING OF DAYS AWAY, THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET, SIR.

A *GIRL.* ALFRED.

"SHE ASKED TO BE INTRODUCED, SIR. YOU KNEW HER AS A BOY. ***JULIE MADISON.*** YOU WENT TO SCHOOL TOGETHER. SHE SAYS YOU DATED BRIEFLY."

"...JULIE."

THERE'S NO HARM IN RECONNECTING, SIR. WE ARE RELAXING TODAY. YOU SAID SO YOURSELF.

SURE. BRING HER OVER. BUT *ALFRED...*

I...

...YOU HAVE TO KNOW...

...I'LL NEVER QUIT.

HEH. YOU SAY THAT NOW, SIR, BUT YOU'RE YOUNG. YOU'RE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD. YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD ME TALK ABOUT *ACTING* AT YOUR AGE, HOW I'D NEVER--

ALFRED, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T KNOW...

SIR?

NOT LONG AFTER THEY DIED...MOM AND DAD...I WAS HAVING A...A HARD TIME.

"NO. *MORE* THAN A HARD TIME. EVERYWHERE I LOOKED, I SAW THEM. MY PARENTS. IN EVERY FACE. I COULDN'T LIVE. COULDN'T FUNCTION. THE WORLD WAS LIKE SOME NIGHTMARE HALL OF MIRRORS.

"SO, I PAID SOMEONE TO PRETEND TO BE YOU, ALFRED. I GOT PAPERS. I PAID THE DOCTORS AT ARKHAM..."

"SIR, IF YOU NEEDED TREATMENT..."

"I DIDN'T WANT TREATMENT, ALFRED. I WANTED TO STOP BEING ME.

"I WANTED TO BE REBOOTED. STARTED OVER. I WANTED THEM TO SHOCK ME UNTIL I WASN'T MYSELF ANYMORE. UNTIL I WAS SOMEONE *ELSE*."

"SIR, I...

"I CAME SO CLOSE, ALFRED. I WAS SECONDS AWAY. BUT I KNEW..."

WAIT! STOP!

...I KNEW I HAD TO FIND *SOME WAY* OF FIGHTING THROUGH IT.

I HAD TO FIND THE CRAZY THING THAT WOULD KEEP ME FROM GOING CRAZY, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

BRUCE...

IN THE CITY TODAY, ALFRED, *NOW* MORE THAN EVER, EVIL MEN, SICK MEN, THEY STEP FROM THE SHADOWS TO KILL AND TERRIFY, AND *BATMAN* WILL DRAW THEIR FIRE. HE WILL BE THE LIGHTNING ROD.

HE WILL SHOW THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM NOT TO BE AFRAID. IT'S THE THING, ALFRED. IT'S WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY. IT'S *ALL* THAT MAKES ME HAPPY.

YOU SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW, MASTER BRUCE.

YOU DON'T. THERE ARE JOYS YOU HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED.

DEEPER TYPES OF HAPPINESS.

NOT FOR ME.

...

SIR, JUST ONE DRINK.

A DRINK, SIR.

I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU.

ALFRED, IF HE'S BUSY, IT'S--

DON'T BE SILLY, MS. MADISON.

BRUCE?

JULIE. WHAT A NICE SURPRISE.

I KNOW, I KNOW. BUT I JUST MOVED HERE AND--

WAIT, WAIT. YOU MOVED HERE *NOW.* AFTER WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

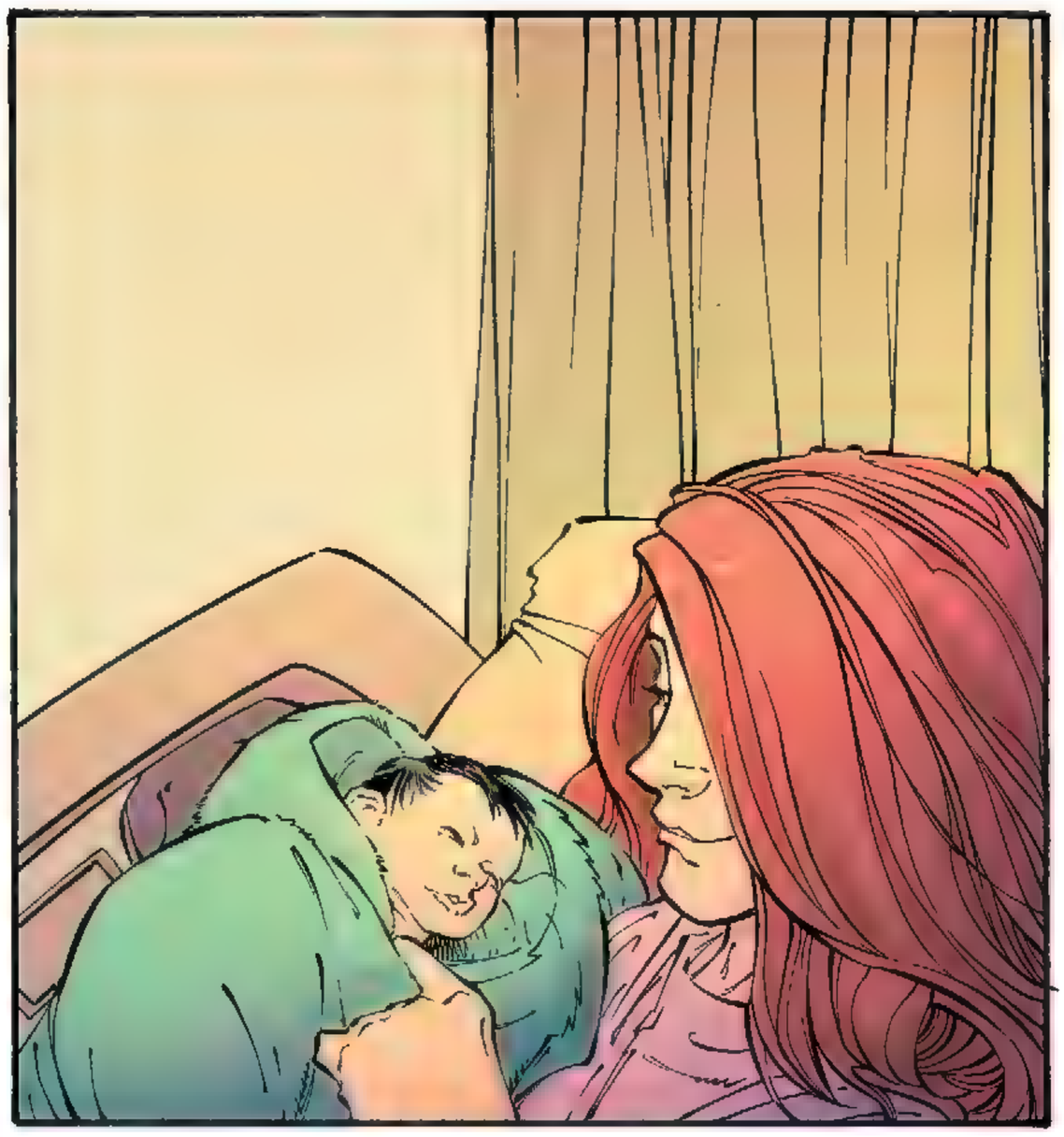
I SAW YOU ON TELEVISION DURING THE RED HOOD ATTACK, AND THEN ALL THIS HAPPENED WITH NYGMA, AND...

...I GUESS I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS AN IMPORTANT TIME TO COME HOME.

HUH. WELL, I'M GLAD YOU DID.

WE DON'T HAVE ANY "ROBOT BEES," YOU KNOW.

CYBORG *MUTANT* BEES, BRUCE. GET IT STRAIGHT.



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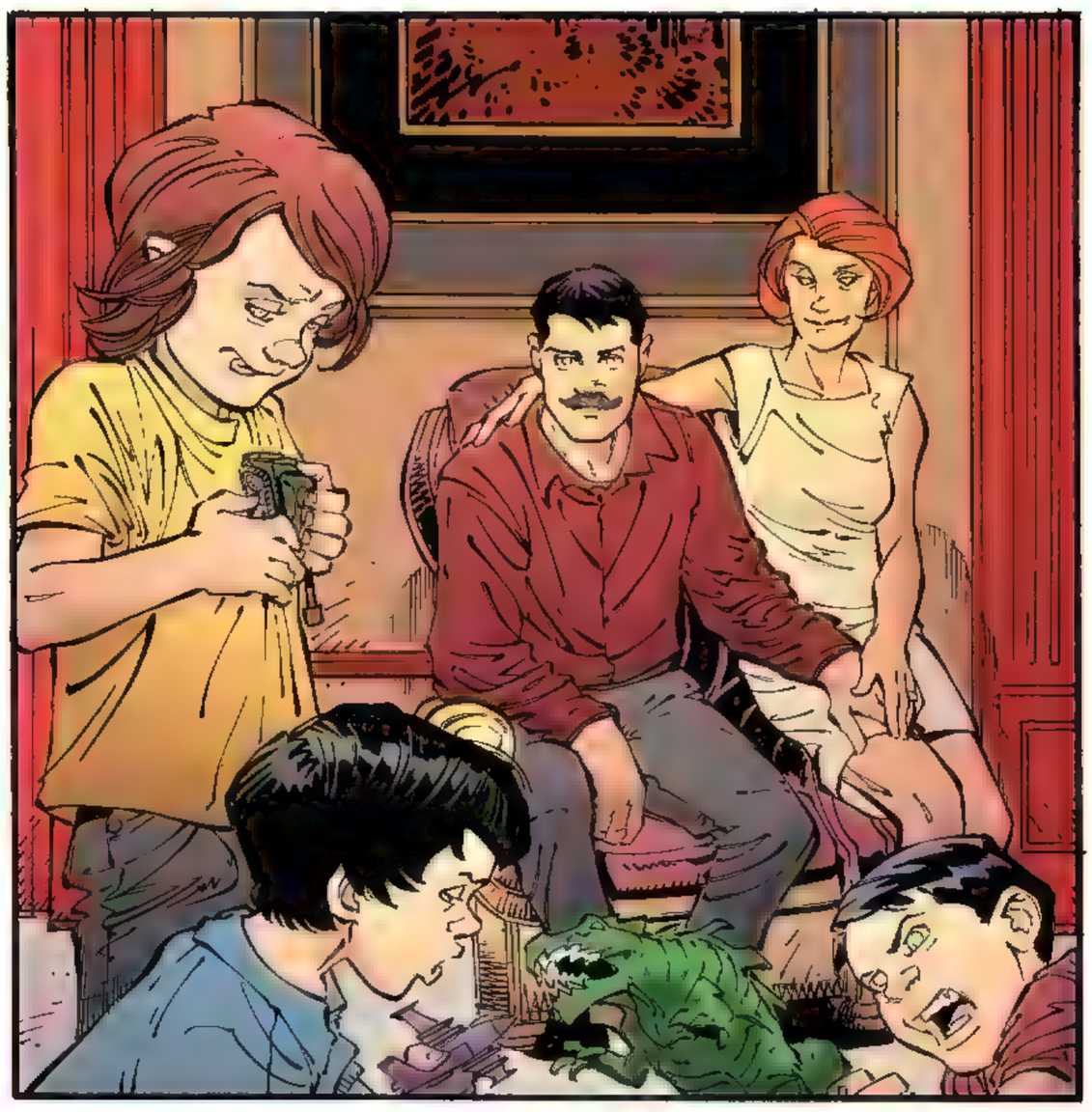


THANK YOU, ALFRED.

OF COURSE.

"ALFRED?"

ALFRED? YOU WERE SAYING?

SO. ANY HOPE?

WHAT...?

OH, I...

I'M SO SORRY, MISS, BUT I'M AFRAID...

"...HE'S SPOKEN FOR."

SWAMP THING

Ah, summer…maybe it's the anticipation of a new fall TV season, but growing up, that was the time I got excited about big things for my favorite comics.

As you can see to the left, some pretty big things are in store for SWAMP THING this fall! It's all about expanding the mythology, taking Swampy to new, epic places!

You know how the Green connects and controls all plant life on Earth, and Mr. Ensalada is the avatar representing the Green? Well, you'll first get a taste of the newest, most calculating and, in many ways, most powerful avatar come September and the line-wide FUTURES END event. This new kingdom will stay in play in October, as we begin the "Machine Queen" arc, the biggest story yet for Alec Holland—the one that ties it all together!

Holding to our fine tradition of making our annuals essential reading, October's SWAMP THING ANNUAL #3 will give you the fight you've been waiting for, as Etrigan the Demon comes to collect on a thousand-year-old deal for the soul of one of Swampy's closest allies, French assassin Capucine, a.k.a. the "Murder Poet." Given Etrigan's interests (he's from hell—YOU do the math), is it any wonder the lady of blades sought Swampy's vegetarian protection?

Issue #38, titled "In Space, No One Can Hear You Grow," is the start of a one-of-a-kind adventure for the avatar of crustaceous vegetables, and can you believe what he's taking on to help mankind colonize the stars?

And somewhere along the way, Big Green will team up with an old ally against his greatest nemesis and greatest love in a truly arcane adventure.

The next six months of SWAMP THING will find the biggest, scariest, most mind-blowing stories we've yet told in The New 52. You want new? You want fresh? Like salad fresh? READ SWAMP THING.

Oh, and one of those four scenarios isn't real. Can you guess which one?

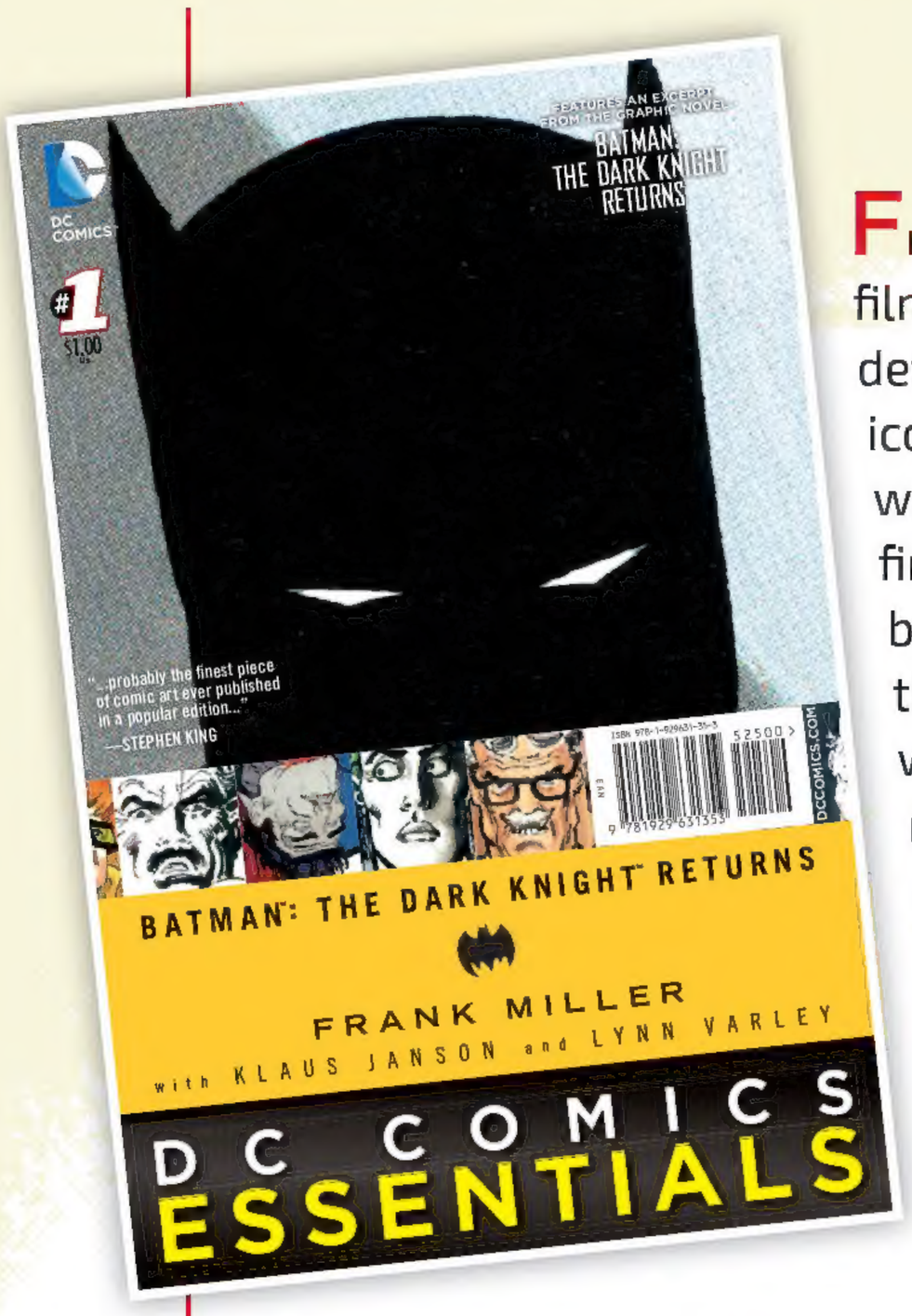
—MATT IDELSON
Group Editor of Mixed Veggies

SWAMP THING
Promo art by Aaron Lopresti, Danny Miki, and Lee Loughridge

IN STORES **FALL 2014**

CELEBRATE 75 YEARS OF BATMAN WITH BATMAN ESSENTIALS

DC All Access


FEATURES AN EXCERPT FROM THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
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—STEPHEN KING
BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
FRANK MILLER
with KLAUS JANSON and LYNN VARLEY
DC COMICS ESSENTIALS

From animated and live-action television series and feature films to critically acclaimed video games and amazingly detailed action figures, Batman has become a major cultural icon—an instantly recognizable symbol the world over. And while the Dark Knight has spanned the gamut of media since first swinging onto the scene 75 years ago, his storied career began in the pages of comics, which is why if you're a fan of the Caped Crusader looking to venture into the comic book world of Gotham City for the first time, we're giving you a metaphorical roadmap with a few $1.00 Essential Batman reads!

Each month from August to December DC Entertainment is releasing special $1.00 issues featuring the full first chapters or excerpts from some of our best-selling, critically acclaimed Batman titles as well as selected pages from our 2014 DC ESSENTIAL GRAPHIC NOVEL AND COLLECTIONS catalog spotlighting even more acclaimed tales of the Dark Knight for readers looking to check out our extensive library.

It all begins with the seminal BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS #1 SPECIAL EDITION by Frank Miller in August and then continues in September with BATMAN AND SON #1 SPECIAL EDITION by Grant Morrison and Andy Kubert; BATMAN: THE BLACK MIRROR #1 SPECIAL EDITION by Scott Snyder and Francesco Francavilla in October; BATMAN: YEAR ONE #1 SPECIAL EDITION by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli in November and BATMAN: HUSH #1 SPECIAL EDITION by Jeph Loeb and Jim Lee in December.

Don't forget to also pick up a copy of the BATMAN: A CELEBRATION OF 75 YEARS hardcover collection featuring classic tales from throughout the Dark Knight's storied career!

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BATMAN (ISSN #2164-8735) 33. September, 2014. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 8537, Big Sandy, TX 75755-8537. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) $33.99. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2014 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork.
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